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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

Staffing and functions of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the Centre for Human Rights

Eleventh report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/48/77) on the staffing and functions of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the Centre for Human Rights and met with representatives of the Secretary-General.

2. The General Assembly, by its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, established the post of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; in this connection the Secretary-General submitted a statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/48/61) indicating that, while the High Commissioner would draw on the resources of the Centre to fulfil his tasks, a number of additional posts (one Under-Secretary-General, two P-5 and three General Service) would need to be established, with operational funds totalling $1,471,400. While the Assembly did not approve the establishment of these posts, it authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not to exceed $1,471,400.

3. By its resolution 48/121 of 20 December 1993, the General Assembly endorsed the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights; in a related statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/48/46) the Secretary-General indicated that one P-5, one P-4 and two General Service posts would be required, with operational funds totalling $1,167,500. The Assembly did not approve the establishment of these posts but authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not to exceed $1,167,500.

4. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 48/228 A of 23 December 1993, while accepting the proposals of the Secretary-General for the staffing resources for human rights activities, requested the Secretary-General to review the allocation of resources among the approved programmes in section 21 of the programme budget so as to ensure the most effective delivery of all mandated activities.

5. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to provide for its review at its resumed forty-eighth session information which the Advisory Committee had requested, i.e., information relating to questions of redeployment, conversion and creation of posts with a clear table indicating the existing posts, a precise description of the functions to be performed by the 55 posts involved (24 new, 19 redeployed and 12 converted), an explanation of the programmatic justifications of the redeployment and an update of the proceedings in the Third Committee with regard to the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action.

6. The Advisory Committee believes that the information provided in the Secretary-General's report represents a partial response to the questions previously raised by the Committee and requested by the General Assembly as indicated in paragraphs 4 and 5 above. While the report contains a comprehensive list of posts, both existing and proposed, it does not clearly indicate the organizational and resource relationship between the Centre and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

7. However, the Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 4 of the Secretary-General's report that in the limited amount of time since the High Commissioner took up his duties on 31 March 1994, it has not been possible for him to complete a review of the current organizational arrangements for his office in particular and the Centre as a whole, and to fully assess his requirements. The Advisory Committee trusts that in assessing the requirements of the High Commissioner as well as the Centre, the Committee's concerns and observations in the paragraphs below will be borne in mind.

8. The Advisory Committee requests that the Secretary-General indicate to what extent General Assembly resolutions 48/121, 48/129 of 20 December 1993 (on strengthening the Centre for Human Rights), and 48/141 have been implemented with respect to the existing structure of the Centre vis-à-vis the Office of the High Commissioner. The Advisory Committee believes that the mandates under General Assembly resolution 48/141, together with the existing mandates relating to the Centre, need to be considered in a comprehensive manner with a view to avoiding duplication and to ensuring that optimum use of existing resources is made. For this purpose, the Committee recommends that an organizational chart indicating the entire staffing complement be provided.

9. For example, from the information provided in the Secretary-General's present report, there appears to be duplication of existing and envisaged functions and resources, in areas such as the Liaison Office in New York. The Advisory Committee does not believe there is sufficient justification for creating additional and/or separate entities performing similar or related functions. The Committee trusts that in assessing the overall requirements as

indicated above, utmost care would be taken to ensure that neither functions nor resources are duplicated.

10. The Advisory Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to the question of the appointments of special representatives for human rights. The Committee believes that there is a need for clarification of the role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Human Rights vis-à-vis the Centre, the High Commissioner and the Commission for Human Rights. Clarification should include the terms of appointment and conditions of service of the special representatives as well as the method of financing.

11. Upon receipt of the additional information as requested, and the finalization of the assessment as indicated in paragraph 7 above, the Advisory Committee will revert to the consideration of the staffing and functions of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the Centre for Human Rights.